

Feeding of Kookaburras.—An interesting example of how necessary a good pair of field glasses is for accurate observation, took place at Mundaring Weir during a Naturalist Club excursion on nearby. Hanging from its beak was an animal which was variously October 20, 1946. A Kookaburra (*Dacelo gigas*) flew to a tree identified by several observers as a snake one foot long, a lizard, and by one person only, correctly, as a frog (almost certainly *Hyla aurea*). One leg hanging down gave the erroneous impression of length, such as would be characteristic of a snake or lizard. During the afternoon either the same Kookaburra or others brought in the following food:—a jilgie (*Chaeraps*) with both claws missing, a small skink lizard and a swamp tortoise (*Chelodina longicollis*).

—V. N. SERVENTY, Subiaco.

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The Flight of the Pelican. The flight of birds is always a source of interest, whether it be because there is such great variety or because it seems to be an indication of tremendous strength and staying power. It was therefore not unusual that when in February, 1947, I saw six of our Pelicans (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) taking off from the water of Butler's Swamp at Claremont and ascend into the blue, I should keep the birds under observation until they rose almost out of sight, until in fact they were mere specks, just a mere pinpoint against the white clouds. I watched the birds for some time until they ceased circling and flew off to the north.

The question then arose what altitude had the birds attained? To this I knew no answer and so decided to write to the Chief of the Division of Aeronautics of the C.S.I.R. in Melbourne. In due course, Mr. L. P. Coombes replied that if the birds were directly overhead then they were probably at 10,000 feet, but if the angle was 45° then the height would be in the vicinity of 7,000 feet. Mr. Coombes added that he had forwarded my query to Captain J. Laurence Pritchard, the Secretary of the Royal Aeronautical Society of Great Britain, who had made a special study of birds.

Captain Pritchard took the matter up and in his letter of April 10 wrote: "The Pelican is a much more strongly flying bird than is generally realised, ungainly though it looks on the ground. I should judge that if you could just see it as a speck in the sky it would be up round about 8,000 to 10,000 feet."

This reply reminded me that some years ago an amateur airman practising making altitude met a bird at 10,000 feet, which he thought might be an albatross, but which in all probability was another Pelican preparing to move off. This observation, too, was made in the vicinity of Perth.

—L. GLAUERT, Perth.